

VZCZCXRO0025  
RR RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHKB #0306 0581402  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 271402Z FEB 06  
FM AMEMBASSY BAKU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9718  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0277  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0010  
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0146

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 000306

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS USAID

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/24/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KFLU](#) [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [MAPP](#) [AJ](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S CHIEF OF STAFF ON MAY ELECTIONS, JC3,  
AND AVIAN FLU

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RENO L. HARNISH III; REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: During a meeting with the Ambassador, Presidential Chief of Staff Ramiz Mehdiyev was in general agreement with our approach to May parliamentary re-run elections, and did not object to NDI/IRI sending observers if they were interested. He also asked to meet with IRI and NDI country directors soon to discuss their activity in the run-up to the election. On a Joint Communication and Control Center (JC3) for Azerbaijan's Navy and Maritime Border Guard, Mehdiyev agreed to work with both agencies' chiefs to identify a suitable site. Mehdiyev also agreed to discuss our desire for more action on avian influenza with the head of the new Presidential Commission on AI, DPM Abbas Abbasov. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On February 23, Ambassador met with Presidential Chief of Staff Ramiz Mehdiyev. Presidential foreign policy advisor Novruz Mammadov and presidential legal advisor Shahin Aliyev accompanied Mehdiyev. Ambassador outlined broadly USG plans for the May parliamentary re-run elections. With the bilateral relationship on track, he said, the U.S. goal was to have an improved process over the November election. To this end, we would repeat our efforts from the fall, including finger inking, a USG-funded exit poll (administered by IRI) in the 10 constituencies where voting would take place, and USG and international observers. Mehdiyev and Shahin Aliyev asked the Ambassador to verify with IRI and NDI their intent to send observers, as the GOAJ wanted to extend invitations to them but was reluctant to risk a public decline by either organization. Mehdiyev cautioned that local and international organizations should not "be hasty" in their assessment of the May election. However, he generally agreed with the USG approach described by the Ambassador. Finally, he asked that the Embassy arrange for him meetings with the country directors of NDI and IRI to discuss the run-up to the May election.

¶3. (C) On border security, Mehdiyev shared the USG's goal of increasing Azerbaijan's ability to control its section of the Caspian Sea. The Ambassador pointed out that this goal would be simpler if Azerbaijan's Navy and Maritime Border Guard worked closely together. Deputy Prime Minister Eyyubov had committed during a visit by a recent USG delegation to locate a suitable site for a U.S.-built Joint Communications and Control Center. Eyyubov had also committed to provide the USG with a letter requesting Azerbaijani Navy participation in the Caspian Guard program. The Ambassador requested Mehdiyev's support, and intervention if necessary, to ensure that Eyyubov was able to follow through on his commitments.

Mehdiyev agreed to follow up with Eyyubov, noting the importance Azerbaijan attached to working with the U.S. and to controlling its borders.

14. (C) Turning to avian influenza, the Ambassador noted the Embassy's commitment to help the GOAJ deal with the AI threat. Nevertheless, he noted, there was increasing concern that the GOAJ was falling behind on AI. The Ambassador urged Mehdiyev to focus the GOAJ on three vital areas: an active surveillance program in the field to determine the extent of the threat, a detailed and workable action plan to allow donor support to flow where needed, and an effective public information campaign. Mehdiyev noted that the new Avian Influenza Commission had just begun its work; it was too early to assess its efficacy. However, he said, the GOAJ was stepping up prophylactic measures and putting more information out via media. Mehdiyev underscored that he was in constant contact with Deputy Prime Minister Abbas Abbasov, who headed the AI Commission. Mehdiyev also agreed to inform President Aliyev and DPM Abbasov of our concern and suggestions.

HARNISH